



atch as part of a national campaign to raise awareness of the Climate

ABCFC

More than 80 top football clubs will join forces against climate change in the world's biggest football campaign to protect our world, 'Green Football Weekend'.

The Green Football Weekend campaign, which launched today, will culminate in fixtures to be played across the country on the weekend of 3-5 February.

For the next 20 days, clubs across the top divisions are battling it out for the coveted Green Football Cup. But unlike other tournaments, it's fan action that will decide who takes the Cup home, with fans scoring 'green goals' for their club by taking climate-friendly actions - from eating a vegetarian meal to turning the thermostat down one degree or taking a shorter shower.

The competition will culminate in Green Football Weekend on 3-5 February, when clubs will join fans in implementing changes by making their fixtures 'greener games', and some teams will wear green armbands to show their support for protecting our world.

Ahead of this, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Football Team will lace up their boots on Saturday 21st January. Their opponents will be the 'Heaven Help Us' Football Team. Heaven Help Us is a nationwide interfaith community using sport to allow faith communities to positively engage through activity and creates a forum where identities and differences can be celebrated rather than becoming divisive.

During the game and its preparations, the teams will be participating in several 'green goals' including taking public transport or walking to the match, eating a vegetarian meal, and bringing their own water bottles and coffee cups.

In February 2020, the Church of England committed to a target of reaching net-zero carbon by 2030, with churches, schools and buildings beginning to show progress, as shown by a [report](#) published before Christmas.

The game will take place at Surrey Sports Park, Richard Meyjes Rd, Guildford GU2 7AD and kicks off at 12.30pm. All are welcome to attend.

The Archbishop of Canterbury FC was founded by Revd Pouya Heidari, a former professional player in Iran, and played its first game in February 2020. It is formed of clergy and ministers from around the Church of England.

Anyone can participate in the Green Football Weekend campaign. Fans can choose their activities and register their goals at greenfootballweekend.com.

The campaign, which is set to become an annual event, is backed by more than 30 major supporters, including the FA, the EFL, the WSL, the National Trust, RSPB and the Church of England.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said "I'm so pleased that ABC FC is supporting the Green Football Weekend.

"Football is a wonderful way to bring people together around a shared passion and purpose – and there is no greater goal than addressing the climate crisis together

"For me as a Christian, following Jesus has to mean tackling climate change: it's about loving our neighbour and protecting the world that God has created.

"I'll be praying for all the teams taking part in the Green Football Weekend campaign, and praying too that it inspires fans and communities to score plenty of 'green goals' along the way."

The Bishop of Derby, Libby Lane, the Church of England's Lead Bishop for Sport, said "I'm delighted to endorse Green Football Weekend and it is my hope that all our individual actions will add up: from choosing to walk to the match this weekend, to turning down the heating by 1 degree when watching the game at home, to using refillable water bottles at training.

"Football clubs have great communities of supporters, so it is wonderful to see them coming together to tackle climate change.

"We have urgent responsibility as custodians of the planet to act to care for God's creation. There are big national and global decisions to be made and followed through, of course, but each of us must do our bit through persistent everyday choices to contribute to tackling the climate crisis."

Revd Pouya Heidari, Rector of St Mary's, Fetcham, who captains the Archbishop's XI said "God's creation is a gift to our humanity. It is our joy and our duty to be good stewards of our world. Archbishop of Canterbury Football Team is delighted to support Green Football Weekend which raises the issue of climate change.

"In the Anglican Communion we believe in The Five Marks of Mission in which the fifth mark is 'to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth'. It is a privilege to be part of this vital message through faith and football while enjoying God's gifts in creation."

Mohammed Sadiq Patel, who leads the Heaven Help Us team, said: "Everyone at Heaven Help Us - whether Christian, Jewish , Muslim, Hindu, Sikh or Buddhist - is unified in the quest to safeguard the planet.

"As a Muslim, I draw inspiration from two beautiful verses in the Quran: 'It is Allah who made for you the earth a place of settlement, and the sky a ceiling and formed you and perfected your forms and provided you with good things' and 'And He has cast into the earth firmly set mountains, lest it shift with you, and made rivers and roads, that you may be guided'

"Islam encourages us to witness the benefits created in our environment - to shelter, to feed, to travel, it is equally important that we must

equally do everything we can to protect the environment.”

More information

- [Green football weekend - how to get involved](#)
- [Resources for schools](#) (scroll down)

Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/press-releases/archbishop-canterbury-fc-lace-green-campaign-alongside-premier-league-stars>